steamers. Recent public pronouncements as to our prospective gains in tonnage had taken full account of the American ships. The ships were urgently needed during the critical period between now and next year's harvest*

The possibility was suggested of negotiating with the United States Government on the basis of our giving back the vessels after the War.

Mr. Salter, of the Ministry of Shipping, who had just returned from Washington, where he had had an interview with President Wilson on this subject, said that the President was at that time in favour of re-quisitioning the ships, but had come to that conclusion under pressure from Mr. Denman, the ex-head of the American Shipping Board, and on grounds that were not really relevant, and he had promised to reconsider the question. It must be remembered that there was an element *& the United States of America that was very jealous of our Mercantile Marine, and also that the United States Army and Navy were anxious to carry their troops and stores to France in their own ships.

American jealousy of our mercantile marine

The War Cabinet decided to support the policy expressed in Mr. Balfour's letter of the 16th August to the American Ambassador, of appealing to the American sense of justice and goodwill. They asked the Acting Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs after consultation with

An appeal

the Ministry
to Washington of Shipping, to telegraph in
this sense to
His Majesty's Ambassador at Washington,
at the same time pointing out the serious
blow that
would be caused to our tonnage
programme in the
event of requisition.

At the War Cabinet meeting of 24th
August the